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A ent fire in Havelock, Ont.: OPP

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Eighteen was arrested for arson following a fire at an apartment building in th uesday evening.

Peterborough County OPP say around 7 p.m., emergency crews responded to a fire reported at the building at 37 George Street East. Known as “Parkview,” the 20-unit building is operated by the Peterborough Housing Corporation, offering rent-geared to income housing.

Havelock-Belmont-Methuen Township firefighters found one apartment unit engulfed in flames. The fire eventually spread to other units.

OPP say all tenants made it out of the building safely.

A number of displaced tenants were first relocated to the nearby Havelock Lions Club. Some tenants stayed overnight at the Havelock Community Centre arena just metres away. Others stayed with other residents or were taken to the village of Campbellford or nearby motels along Hwy. 7.

Among the tenants impacted was 66-year-old Mike Flood who got out safely with his dog Baggs. He says he and a friend were watching television when they saw particles go by the window and then they noticed a smell “like rubber burning.”

“I went out in the hallway — and other tenants were out there — and you could smell the smoke and start to see it filling up the hallway,” said Flood. “So I helped a couple of people get their cats out and that’s it, down it went.”

Flood said he slept in his truck after the fire since he said no one was able to care for his pet. He was told by fire officials the building could be razed.

Flood, who has lived in the building for 16 years, says he needs to wait for insurance to assess his losses. In the meantime, he says he will reside in his vehicle and “not leave town.”

“At this point I really don’t know what to do,” he told Global News. “I’m 66 and I just lost everything.”

Tenant Irene Hubbard also said she lost “everything.”

“I lost everything in that needless tragedy — including my cat,” she said on the “Havelock, On” Facebook page.

On its Facebook page on Wednesday morning, the Havelock Community Centre thanked the community for its outpouring of support.

“The care and kindness was beautiful to see. We want to give a shout out to the firefighters and police officers that served our community with excellence last night,” the centre stated. “Many people came to offer their homes as a place of rest for the residents and we say thank you. Peterborough Housing was able to secure a hotel room for those that did not have another place to stay.”

Residents quickly gathered up supplies and food to donate to those displaced.

Flood also praised the outpouring of support.

“There is lots of food — no one is going without,” he said. “If you need anything, just ask and it will appear.”

George Street East and nearby Orange Street and Mill Lane were all closed as crews battled the fire.

OPP say their investigation determined that an argument between two people known to each other involved one person uttering threats and then exiting the building. Shortly after the fire broke out, police said.

Around 7:30 p.m., officers received a call about a suspicious person and located the individual.

A Havelock man, 29, was arrested and charged with arson — disregard for human life, possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose, uttering threats — damage property and two counts of failure to comply with a probation order.

The name of the accused will not be released in order to protect the identity of the victim, police said.

The accused was held in custody and is scheduled to appear in court in Peterborough on Wednesday.

Police say the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) was contacted and will be assisting in the investigation.

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